



COUNTY HOSPITAL REGENERATION NOW COMPLETE

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Building a reputation for surgery

FOREWORD

Welcome to this special edition of UHNM news focusing exclusively on County Hospital.

When Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust ceased to provide clinical services in 2014, some local people were concerned about the future of their local hospital. Three years on I'm delighted to say that not only have we delivered on our promise to refurbish all wards and transform the facilities on offer at County, we have also brought a wide range of new services to the hospital.

These include the introduction of bariatric and 23 hour gynaecology, colorectal and upper GI surgery; the creation of an Elective Orthopaedic Unit with inpatient beds and an expanded Renal Unit; two MRI scanners and suites; a dedicated dermatology and plastics outpatient and surgical unit and an ambulatory heart failure service (SHINE@ County). Endoscopy, cardiac rehabilitation, neurology, multiple sclerosis and fracture clinic services have also been expanded, and the breast screening programme aligned with the symptomatic pathways within South Staffordshire in line with national guidelines.

Since 2011, the opening times for the Accident and Emergency Department in Stafford have been from 8am -10pm and this has proved to be safe and effective. Outside of these hours, people can access emergency services at either Stoke or Wolverhampton, and urgent care is provided via GP out of hours or NHS 111. A&E remains an important local service, and we are working closely with our local clinical commissioning groups to look at ways of reducing waiting times and ensuring that we do not admit people unnecessarily or keep them in beds for too long.

County and Royal Stoke University Hospital are both part of one Trust – University Hospitals of North Midlands. Together they ensure that we can offer you a range of high quality services to care for you and your family, and I am extremely proud of both.

Regeneration of County Hospital now complete



County Hospital's £47m regeneration has now been completed following a three year programme across the hospital. Nearly every ward and department at the hospital has been regenerated following its integration into University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust. The major improvement programme included a new A&E, four new wards and many other new facilities.

Paula Clark, Chief Executive, said: "The investment at County Hospital was a clear indication of our commitment to providing the highest level of care to the people of Staffordshire. The programme covered a wide range of services and at the beginning we were all excited by the improvements that these works would bring to both patient experience at County Hospital and the working environment for our staff. Looking back over the three years it's clear the changes have had a huge impact."

UHNM will now be looking to further grow services at County Hospital so that more people can be treated locally, including patients undergoing chemotherapy.

Liz Rix, Chief Nurse, said: "We always knew that if we could get the right staff and improved facilities then patients would start to choose County Hospital again for their care, and this has been the case. Now we will be promoting some of the services that have recently been completed that people in Stafford and the surrounding areas may not have heard about yet. One of these is the excellent Chemotherapy, Oncology and Haematology Unit. Our Charity is also doing some additional fundraising for adjacent garden areas that will give patients an even better environment, so we'd really welcome any support the local community can give us."





Expanded Renal Unit reduces waiting times

Opening the £3.1m Renal Unit at County Hospital has reduced the time patients wait to use the service. The Unit expanded from just seven stations compared to the expanded 12 stations it now has, which is a huge improvement on the old unit. Patients who couldn't access one of the old seven stations used to have to travel to a regional centre three times a week for their dialysis.

Dr Christopher Thompson, Consultant in Renal and Intensive Care Medicine, said: "We had a waiting list for patients given the old unit was so small, and these patients previously had to travel long distances to access their treatment. This record investment in our service not only gives more patients access to services closer to home, it improves patient experience and allows clinicians the space to give the best possible care. These new clinical areas open up opportunities to allow patients to receive a broader range of treatments and access seminars to improve their knowledge and involvement in the care they need, now all closer to home for those in Stafford and surrounds."

Prof Gavin Russell, a former Renal Physician who officially opened the unit and was instrumental in its construction, said: "Having seen the previous facilities the staff were providing care, it is very satisfying to see the efforts of the staff, Trust leadership, construction team and all the support staff in creating this outstanding facility."

Sally Davies, Ward Manager at the Renal Unit, said: "I was delighted for all of our patients as the unit is much more spacious for our staff and the patients. When we first opened the unit the patients were hugely impressed and now that the unit is fully opened we'll be able to deliver the kind of service we have always hoped to."

Hip Hip Hooray – Unit celebrates first birthday

The Unit that cares for hip and knee patients at County Hospital recently celebrated its first birthday. The 29-bed Elective Orthopaedic Unit is one of four wards that have opened in the last year after each underwent a £3m investment. Now the 40-strong team that work on the Unit are looking forward to expanding their service after caring for their first spinal surgery patients.

Janice Wood, Senior Sister, said: "Over the past year our nurses, therapists and general staff have cared for 2,500 patients on the unit. We care for people who have had hip and knee replacements, a wide range of upper and lower limb elective procedures, and last week we had our first spinal patients. A third theatre has now opened at County Hospital and this will only increase the number of patients we care for. This is a fantastic unit with a really dedicated team."

Greg Bicker, Advanced Physiotherapist, said: "We were all really excited when the unit was launched and since then we've had really positive feedback from patients. The unit always scores very highly for patient feedback in our division. We have got plans to improve the unit further so we're all looking forward to the year ahead."

Alan, a patient on the Unit in June 2017, said: "A huge thank you to all staff of Elective Orthopaedic Unit at the County Hospital, Stafford, for the treatment I received when I was admitted for a total hip replacement. Like many others I had suffered constant pain in my left hip and, I must admit, it takes some time to become accustomed to the fact it is no longer there and, for that, it is thanks to staff on EOU. My wife and I were amazed at the cleanliness of all departments which we passed through and the courtesy and kindness of the staff."

Redevelopment of four wards at County Hospital now complete



The four wards and Elective Orthopaedic Unit are now all open and caring for patients. All the areas have either been completely regenerated or refurbished to meet the highest standards of care.

The new Ward 12 provides an increased area for staff to work and is a more comfortable environment for respiratory patients and their visitors. The team were awarded the Care Excellence Framework Platinum award after a recent inspection by the UHNM Senior Nursing team. Ward 14 underwent a similar regeneration and is now providing a high standard of care for general medicine patients.

Elizabeth Baker, Deputy Ward Manager, said: "There are 28 medical patients on the ward and the feedback we receive from them and their relatives is overwhelmingly positive. We're proud to have such a modern facility to treat our

patients and it's exciting to know that this will be our permanent home moving forward."

Ward 8 provides care to patients undergoing Bariatric Surgery. Finally, the Acute Medical Unit team, who deal with the immediate and early treatment of adult patients with a variety of medical conditions, have won UHNM Team of the Month in recognition of their outstanding team spirit.

The Acute Medical Unit is still to undergo a short refurbishment but has still been receiving good reviews from new staff. Jo Perrins, AMU Ward Manager, said: "We believe it is really important to value the staff who work here and to give them the best welcome they can possibly have. Happy staff means happy patients and a smiling and confident team can help patients to feel welcome and comfortable. We were thrilled to have the team of month

award at the time as we work very hard and it means a lot to have our efforts recognised in this way."

All the wards are supported by the hospital kitchens, which underwent a £2m investment. Last year the hospital was given the highest rating under the national food hygiene rating scheme. Inspectors found that staff and facilities were spotless and food hygiene and safety procedures modernised and updated. Inspectors were particularly impressed by the "restaurant style" trolleys used to transport, cook and serve the food on the wards.

Robert Willatt, Catering Manager, said, "We were very pleased to achieve the top rating. Food hygiene and the quality of food is something we take extremely seriously and to receive the highest rating for hygiene reflects the continued hard-work and professionalism of our team."



Elderly patients well cared for on Ward 15 after £3m regeneration



The Elderly Care ward at County Hospital was the first to open following its £3m regeneration. The 28 bed ward is a much more modern, attractive environment from the ward patients were previously treated in. It has 12 single en-suite rooms and four four-bedded bays, whereas the old ward had just one side room. In addition the bed spaces have been increased by around 50% and more toilets and en-suite facilities have been introduced.

Liz Rix, Chief Nurse, said: "The old ward facilities were not fit for purpose, with limited single sex access to toilets, limited privacy, and no space for private conversations with patients and relatives. Patients were also highly susceptible to cross infections due to only one side room being available. The staff working on the old ward did their very best in these conditions but it was very difficult. Over the past year the new facilities have allowed staff to transform the care they are able to provide and the patients and their families have been delighted by the difference."

Ward 15 was part of a record £250m investment aimed at improving healthcare services for people across Staffordshire. Julie Woodworth, Ward 15 Sister, said: "My team were really excited when we moved in as we were able to provide quality care with dignity, privacy and a welcoming environment in the new ward. The initial reaction of patients to the environment was fantastic. The new wards provide a more pleasant patient experience and sometimes may even aid recovery by lifting people's spirits."

In addition, one of UHNM's elderly care consultants, Dr Amit Arora, has been leading a national campaign around getting elderly patients up and moving to avoid what is known as deconditioning. Dr Arora has been a pioneer in suggesting that proportional physical activity can be a huge factor in an elderly patient's recovery.

Dr Arora, said: "Prolonged hospital stays, bed rest and associated risks may lead to loss of muscle power, strength and abilities in older people. This is something we need to avoid, which is why we focus on achieving a shorter length of stay, better outcomes for patients and better ability at discharge. It's fantastic that people are talking and helping to raise awareness about the work we are doing at UHNM to help combat 'Deconditioning Syndrome'.

"Older people, whether in hospitals, care homes or at their own homes, who do not get enough opportunity to mobilise, can have an increased risk of reduced bone mass and muscle strength, reduced mobility, increased dependence, confusion and demotivation.

"Of course, preventing Deconditioning Syndrome requires a broader strategic approach than just prescribing physical activity, but it's a start. Other factors that effectively prevent deconditioning, include physical therapy, maintenance of nutrition, medical management, and psychological support including addressing loneliness. The latter is something that everyone in the community could help with."



Host of specialist services now available at County Hospital

The regeneration of County Hospital now means patients can be treated closer to home rather than travel to a big regional centre. University Hospitals of North Midlands has transformed the services available closer to people's homes. These include chemotherapy treatment, renal dialysis care and specialist outpatient clinics.

One of the key services is the £2.1m Chemotherapy, Oncology and Haematology Unit. The Unit, which first opened its doors to patients back in August 2016, is a state-of-the-art facility that serves patients requiring treatment for a range of cancers, including the treatment for blood related cancers such as Leukaemia, Lymphoma and Myeloma. The Unit will also look after other non-cancer blood related conditions. The Unit features a number of private consultation rooms and a room reserved for procedures, these areas have helped improve privacy for patients and relatives. Opposite the waiting room is the new Fresh Hair Salon. The UHNM Charity funded salon offers practical help and support to those facing the often distressing cosmetic side effects of chemotherapy.

Mr John Oxtoby, Medical Director, said: "The staff on the Unit have a long tradition for providing the highest quality of care for patients and support for relatives, during what can be an incredibly stressful time."

Kerry Pearson, Sister, said: "The feedback we have received from patients and relatives has been overwhelmingly positive. From the team's point of view, the facility provides us with a much improved working area to carry out our day to day tasks and it's been very pleasing to see how much the patients appreciate it. Having worked in the hospital for more than a decade, I have witnessed the growth of our services, this Unit provides us with a fantastic opportunity to enhance the patients' journey and means a lot to our staff, patients and relatives."

One of the largest departments at County Hospital is the outpatients department. The team have recently been awarded the Care Excellence Framework platinum award for the care they provide. At UHNM the outpatients staff work across both sites to ensure parity of standards and to infuse a camaraderie amongst their teams.

Karen Henshall, Outpatients matron, said: "The team and I have worked hard to ensure that the outpatients department at County Hospital is as welcoming as possible. All the staff have embraced the 'Hello my name is' and 'It's OK to ask' campaigns. In addition, patient feedback is positive but we do act on suggestions by a you said we did approach."

"Our vision for the service is to lead with compassion and to invest and nurture in our staff to grow and inspire them to give of their best. Our staff have been instrumental in embracing new ways of working and trying to grow the number of clinics we can provide, including new services."

Carol McCormick, Outpatients senior sister, said: "We've been working with patient and support groups to improve the environment and communication pathways for our patients. This encompasses easy read patient information leaflets for people with cognitive impairments, signage and wayfinding and assessing our departments for health literacy standards. This is to ensure that all individuals can understand the information provided to assist them to make a choice in their health and treatment."

MRI services are growing



County Hospital recently celebrated the installation of its second permanent MRI scanner. The new addition to the hospital's MRI department allows UHNM to deliver a local service and help reduce patient waiting times. Prior to the creation of the Unit in 2015, patients had to be transferred to another hospital via an ambulance or use an outside scanner when one was temporarily available on site.

Jonathan Barnett, Directorate Manager for Imaging, said: "This latest installation means that not only is UHNM one of the largest MRI providers in the country, we also have the equipment to perform most of our specialist MRI scans at County Hospital. This includes Cardiac, Breast, Neurology and Vascular imaging. This will benefit both inpatients and outpatients across the Trust."

"The MRI scanner has the additional benefit of state-of-the-art software, which enables us to perform peripheral angiography without the traditional use of contrast agents. This is greatly beneficial for patients with low renal function where the use of contrast is contraindicated. The new second scanner gives us the required scanning capacity for the foreseeable future, ensuring that we not only meet the six-week target for referral to scan, but that we are able to reduce this to as short a waiting time as possible to facilitate rapid reporting and treatment when required."

Paula Clark, Chief Executive, said: "UHNM is delivering on its promise to the people of Stafford and the surrounding areas by installing permanent MRI scanners. This is a fantastic step forward for diagnostics at County Hospital and delivers more care locally for the people of Stafford and the surrounding areas. The scanner is the seventh one to be installed at UHNM."

Endoscopy JAG accreditation



- The Endoscopy team at County Hospital have achieved formal 'JAG Accreditation' for the first time. JAG Accreditation is the formal recognition that an Endoscopy service has demonstrated that it has the competence to deliver against the Endoscopy GRS standards.
- Shirley Roberts, Endoscopy Unit Manager, said: "Obtaining JAG accreditation represents that the highest quality of Endoscopy services and training are provided here at County Hospital. This recognition now provides us with the opportunity to expand our services to provide screenings as part of the Bowel Cancer Screening service."
- "Coming into the team as the new manager in May 2016, we knew that we had a lot to do if we wanted to achieve accreditation. However, as a result of all the hard work and commitment to the development of the service from the nursing staff, support staff, nurse endoscopists, consultants and management we achieved this."
- The JAG Accreditation Scheme is a patient centred and workforce focused scheme based on the principle of independent assessment against recognised standards. The scheme was developed for all endoscopy services and providers across the UK in the NHS and Independent Sector.
- Shirley said: "Following the recognition the assessment team congratulated our team on the 'calm environment' and 'patient focused' service and also noted that they would be happy to come to the Unit for a procedure themselves. For us however, the hard work will continue as we need to maintain and protect our accreditation status."



County Hospital state-of-the-art theatres and centre of excellence

County Hospital is expanding its Theatres and surgery expertise as part of its continued growth as a day surgery centre of excellence. A state-of-the-art theatre is already being used to treat patients requiring hip and knee operations, who then recuperate and rehabilitate on the Elective Orthopaedic Unit. The new laminar flow theatres are part of the £47m being spent on County Hospital to renovate and enhance patient areas. The hospital now has three laminar flow theatres, and a further four conventional theatres, meaning more orthopaedic patients in Stafford and the surrounding areas can be treated closer to their homes rather than travel to a big regional centre.

Gareth Hurley, Matron for Theatres at County Hospital said: "Patients and staff have really seen the benefits from these laminar flow theatres. They allow us to provide the very best quality Orthopaedic care and experience in first class facilities. It also enables us

to improve patient flow and efficiency, which will mean more people will be treated quicker. We are regularly receiving very positive feedback from our patients who have had their surgery at County Hospital, staff have done an amazing job to establish this high quality service for our patients."

Laminar flow theatres use a 'clean air' system which takes bacteria out of the air in operating theatres and reduces the risk of infection to patients. The upgrade ensures patients will be treated using the latest modern technology. County Hospital has seven operating theatres in total, the expanded and refurbished Recovery area was created last year.

Paula Clark, Chief Executive, said: "By improving and adding to the theatre capacity at County Hospital it allows the Trust to ensure our new and expanded surgical services can grow and improve experiences for patients locally. Improving and increase theatre

capacity is one of a number of schemes to provide high quality, modern facilities for the people of Stafford and the surrounding areas. County Hospital is an integral part of the UHNM family."

The expanded theatres are also being used by the Bariatric and Gynaecology teams. Dr John Oxtoby, Medical Director, said: "Moving services to County Hospital has been an unqualified success. What surgeons need is guaranteed theatre time where there isn't going to be the chance that a critical emergency patient is going to take precedence. That's why having dedicated theatre sessions at County Hospital are so popular with surgeons. Add to this the fact that the beds on the wards are also protected for their patients, along with the dedicated nursing and support team, the demand to work at County Hospital is understandable."





Bariatric Surgery service to become leading centre in the West Midlands

The Bariatric Surgery service at County Hospital in Stafford has now completed more than 100 surgical procedures. This is an important milestone demonstrating the safety of the service since it began in December 2016, which has now moved to a new permanent seven bed unit at the hospital. The success of the department has resulted in it being approached to take patients from across the West Midlands and North West.

Mr Vittal Rao, Consultant Upper GI/Bariatric Surgeon and Clinical Lead, Department of Bariatric and Metabolic Surgery, said: "The move to County Hospital has been an unqualified success and our patients have been delighted with the new service. The key to our success has been the support from all the staff involved and access to a dedicated theatre and supportive ward to ensure that the surgery can go ahead as scheduled without delay. We are now being contacted from clinicians across the region to see if we can take their patients, which is a credit to everyone here in Stafford."

"Studies have shown bariatric surgery to be both clinically and cost effective. It's a long road for patients but the

procedure can help severely obese patients to reduce weight by as much as 25-35% in one year. The majority of our patients could not climb three flights of stairs without resting, but following surgery most can live a normal life within a year. It also results in improvement and in some cases complete cure of common medical conditions associated with obesity such as diabetes, sleep apnoea, high blood pressure and other allied medical conditions.

"With the ever increasing problem of overweight and obese population and in these difficult times of scarce and overstretched resources, now is the time to invest more in this life enhancing surgery which has been shown to deliver huge savings to the NHS."

The unit operates 23 hours a day and will treat 350 patients a year. With this, the unit at County hospital will be the leading bariatric centre in the West Midlands with potential to become a centre of excellence in the country. There are four bariatric consultants at County Hospital with a 50 strong support team of specialist nurses, dietitians, endocrinologists, anaesthetists and secretarial staff.

Julie Williams, Senior Sister Ward 8, said: "Our philosophy is that the entire team on the unit promotes individualised holistic care to ensure the health and wellbeing of our patients. We really empower our patients to make informed decisions and strongly believe that they should be involved in all of their treatment and care. We not only place great value on the physical components of health but we also recognise the significance of psychological aspects of health. Our ambition is to promote healthy living through change of lifestyle, healthy diet and exercise."

Paula Clark, Chief Executive, said: "I want to pay tribute to the team at County Hospital. Moving the service from Royal Stoke to County Hospital has required a huge amount of work from all involved and the benefits to patients are there for all to see. The dedicated unit means that there is far less impact from pressures in other parts of the hospital and gives patients greater access to this life changing surgery."



Cancer patients at County Hospital helped through new group sessions

The Chemotherapy, Oncology and Haematology Unit have set-up new group sessions to help cancer patients. People who need chemotherapy can now meet together for support and advice, thanks to the innovative new service at County Hospital.

Staff Nurse Jackie Cooper and Healthcare Support Worker Karen Ryell have teamed up to create a pre-assessment group, which allows patients to receive essential information about their upcoming treatment as part of a caring group environment. This new approach to appointments not only enables patients to build a support network with people undergoing a similar experience but also means that more patients can be seen in less time.

Kerry Pearson, Senior Sister on the Unit, said: "The idea of having chemotherapy can be quite a daunting one and patients have lots of questions about what to expect. Patients who attend group pre-assessments not only have the opportunity to receive lots of information and advice from healthcare professionals, but get to talk

to each other about their experiences and therefore feel less isolated. Of course, we take patient confidentiality very seriously and patients are still able to have one-to-one appointments to discuss personal information as and when necessary.

"Jackie and Karen have worked really well together to make sure the service flows and that there is no time when patients feel like they're just waiting around. Their work means that we have been able to reduce the waiting list for appointments and it has strengthened the working relationship between our two hospital sites as well. The feedback that we have received from patients has all been very positive and colleagues have been supportive too."

Claire MacKirdy, Director of Operations at County Hospital, said: "I am really proud of the hard work that Jackie and Karen have invested to put this service together for patients. They have demonstrated real insight into the support people need at such a challenging time."

For all the latest news on County Hospital



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Welcome to Ward 12



Ward 12 at County Hospital showcases excellent work

Ward 12 at County Hospital opened its doors on Friday 15 September 2017 to showcase the good practice and achievements to a number of esteemed visitors and guests. The Ward has been a huge success with patients, visitors and staff since they made the new area their home on 22 April 2017.

Among the visitors today were senior colleagues from across UHNM, including Chief Nurse Lix Rix, the Senior Nursing Team, Director of Finance Sarah Preston and Chief Operating Officer Richard Beeken. The team also welcomed Stafford MP, Jeremy Lefroy, Mayor Councillor Aidan Godfrey and Councillor Patrick Farrington. The feedback from the visit was very positive with particular comments referencing the spacious, calming and patient centric nature of the ward.

Ward 12 Manager, Elaine Khan, hosted the visits and she spoke of the fantastic team spirit and togetherness on Ward 12, which makes it such a positive environment to work in. Elaine, said: "I am very proud of all the work that has gone on from the team to make Ward 12 such a fantastic place to work. The

facilities are outstanding, but it takes more than that to make a real difference to our patients and we've managed to combine a brilliant team ethic with world-class facilities, which make for an extremely positive environment for our patients to receive their care.

"Today is all about embracing our new ward and highlighting all the hard work that has gone on from the staff, to an external audience. It's a real privilege to be able to show local community leaders around the ward and showcase the huge changes and improvements that are continuing to take place at County Hospital. We've been here on the new ward since April 22, 2017 and we've had some fantastic feedback from patients, they absolutely love the thought and consideration that has gone into making the ward a calm and relaxing environment for respiratory patients. It's great for the nursing staff as well as it provides them more space to operate and go about their clinical duties a safe manner."

The Ward 12 team have been recognised for their work recently via the Clinical Excellence Framework (CEF)

awards. The team won the highest, platinum, award as they demonstrated their expertise in each of the assessed categories. Moving forward, the Excellence in Practice Accreditation Scheme (EPAS) is on the radar, and the team are hopeful of achieving that particular recognition in the near future.

Deborah Challinor, Matron, said: "There's been a lot of refurbishment across County Hospital, and Ward 12 is one part of the jigsaw that makes up the regeneration project that is on-going here. We're really proud of how ward is operating and the fact that the patients and their specific needs have been tailored to, really shines through here.

"Days like today are great for us to be able showcase the quality work that goes on every single day at County Hospital. Moving forward we hope to be able to show the local population what brilliant facilities we have here at County and the services on offer."



U·H·N·M
charity

raising funds for university hospitals of north midlands



Volunteering for your local hospital charity can make a big difference

UHNM Charity makes things better for patients, their families and the staff who treat them at the Royal Stoke University Hospital and County Hospital in Stafford.

Volunteers are so important to our work - whether you want to use the knowledge and skills you already have or want to do something new (some support and training is given).

There are many ways to help, from cheering on a marathon runner, swapping collection boxes or helping in our office.

Your time and skills help us to support the people who make donations and fundraise, so we can provide important equipment, new facilities, pioneering research and all the important extras that make our care so special.

Whatever has inspired you to join us, you are very welcome! Get in touch today and you will soon become part of a friendly team that makes a real difference to local people.

If you are interested and would like more information on becoming a volunteer please call 01782 79444 or email us at charity@uhnm.nhs.uk

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